The Craddock Center

ENRICHMENT

Our mission is to deliver educational and cultural programs to children, families, and communities, primarily in Southern Appalachia. We serve by sharing and spreading centuries-old traditions of song and story.

The Craddock Center

P.O. Box 69
186 Fred Craddock Drive
Cherry Log, GA 30522
706-632-1772
craddockcenter@tds.net
craddockcenter.org

MILK & HONEY NEWSLETTER

A Taste of Milk & Honey

It hurts, But I understand when someone turns down our request for financial support with the response, "We give to the poor but to programs that meet their real needs." Meaning, of course, food and clothing, especially at Christmas. Blessings on those programs; who could deny food and clothing to a child?

The Craddock Center is about the business of enriching lives, of lifting self-esteem, of instilling a sense of self-worth, of effecting socialization so that each child can play and study and grow as an equal to other children. We do this through songs, art, and stories. Studies show that participating in such programs increases a child's success in school and in life in the community.

The records of some charities indicate that they give to children just as they gave to their parents and to their grandparents. Generation after generation the story continues the same.

Our goal is to break the cycle, to change the story. There are 13 million children living in depressing poverty in this country. But we get up each morning believing our

small effort is making and will continue to make a difference. And every dollar we receive is an investment in that difference, and, on behalf of the children, we thank you.

- From Dr. Fred Craddock, Milk & Honey, November 2004

The Craddock Center is named



2023 Gilmer Chamber Non-Profit of the Year

On January 26, 2024, The Craddock Center received the award for the 2023 Non-Profit of the Year from the Gilmer Chamber of Commerce for our service to the children and families in our community. Thank you to our volunteers, donors, and staff for making our programs possible.



From the Executive Director

When I joined The Craddock Center in November 2020, I soon learned the following:

- Every year 40% of children go into Kindergarten 1 to 3 years behind.
- Most students who start behind stay behind, year after year.
- Students who start Kindergarten below grade level form the largest cohort of dropouts, and they have less than a 2% chance of attending post high school education.



I was literally horrified by these statistics. But I was also hopeful because of the work of The Craddock Center in helping the children in southern Appalachia prepare for kindergarten. These statistics also led us to the creation of our newest program, Smart Babies.

In early January, I learned there was movement at the Georgia capital to make a significant increase in spending for pre-K in Georgia. I decided I needed to do something to help. I did something that I have never done before...I sent a "letter to editor" to our two local newspapers. My letter (below) appeared in both papers on 1/17/24.

MAKE PRE-K MANDATORY IN GEORGIA

Did you know...every year 40% of children go into Kindergarten 1 to 3 years behind. Most students who start behind stay behind, year after year. Students who start Kindergarten below grade level form the largest cohort of dropouts, usually by the 10th grade, and they have less than a 2% chance of post high school education. Also, from birth to age 5, a child learns at a speed unmatched for the rest of their life (source: Children's Reading Foundation).

On January 11, 2024, I sent an email to our State Representative Johnny Chastain and State Senator Steve Gooch encouraging them to push for legislation to support mandatory pre-K in the Georgia.

There is so much work to do. In the five counties (Gilmer, Fannin, Dawson, Lumpkin, and Union) represented by Mr. Chastain and Mr. Gooch, a large percentage of the pre-K children, ages 3 – 4 years old, are not attending pre-K or Head Start. The average amongst the five counties is 64.72% of the children are NOT attending. (source: Annie E. Casie Foundation)

The success of our children's future is dependent on the investment in early children education. For the five counties listed above, only 48% of 3rd and 5th grade students are at proficient and above level on the Georgia Milestones Assessment. These percentages need to be higher for the future success of our children. (source: Annie E. Casie Foundation)

A study by the University of North Carolina was conducted in 2012 – 2013 to look at the effectiveness of Georgia's Pre-K program on school readiness skills. Results showed that participation in Georgia's pre-K program significantly improved children's school readiness skills across a wide range of language, literacy, math, and general knowledge measures. The positive effects were found for both boys and girls and children from families of different income levels.

We don't have to start from scratch! Let's expand Georgia's successful pre-k program and invest in the futures of our children, our communities, and our state.

I am pleased to report that both State Representative Chastain and State Senator Gooch said they would support an initiative to increase spending for pre-K in Georgia.

I have one more statistic that I would like to share with you - from birth to age 5, a child learns at a speed unmatched for the rest of their life.

Thank you to all of our wonderful supporters who make the programs such as the Children's Enrichment Program and Smart Babies possible. Our work is helping the wonderful children we serve prepare for success for the rest of their lives!

Blessings to you all!





TOURNAMENT

The Craddock Center

the

2023 Gilmer Chamber Non-Profit of the Year

Hosts

Annual Family Mini Golf Tournament

DATE: Saturday, May 11, 2024

TIME: Tee Times 10:00 am to 11:30 am

LOCATION: Cohutta Cove Mini Golf & Gem Mining 64 Dunbarton Farm Road, Blue Ridge, GA 30513

COST: \$20 / family no matter the size

19th Hole Provided by the Smokehouse Country Grill

THERE WILL BE:

Wacky Golf, Treasure Hunt, Face Painting, Awards, Balloon Artist, Door Prizes, and much more.







Three Generations of Service to The Craddock Center

On Saturday, March 16th, Ethan Hellman and six of his fraternity brothers from the Sigma Nu Fraternity at the University of North Georgia provided a day of service to The Craddock Center. Ethan said, "One of our missions as a brotherhood is to serve and give back to the community around us! I personally chose The Craddock Center because I love y'all's mission to serve families in the North Georgia region and as a way of honoring my grandmother and the work she did there."

These fine young men completed many projects to beautify the grounds of The Craddock Center.

Thank you for your service!

Ethan is the son of Mark Hellman, a former Board Member of The Craddock Center. He is also the grandson of Louise Hellman, a volunteer who served The Craddock Center for many years. The Bookroom of The Craddock Center is named in her memory for her service to the communities we serve. Ethan's grandfather, Gordon Hellman, continues to volunteer by making wooden toys for our children.

Thank you to the Hellman family!



We Serve by Sharing – The Legacy Program of The Craddock Center

First, thank you for your support of the work of The Craddock Center. Because of you, we **ARE** making a difference in the communities of southern Appalachia. The Craddock Center wants to continue to make a difference in the decades to come and beyond.

This month we are launching the Legacy Program of The Craddock Center - We Serve by Sharing. "We Serve by Sharing" is from The Craddock Center Mission Statement. We serve the children and share our time, skills, talents, and money to sustain the work and plan for and build for the future of The Craddock Center.

The Craddock Center has been serving the children and families in our communities for 23 years. We don't know what our communities will look like 25 years from now, but we have no doubt that what we do for the children will continue to be needed.

Please consider a planned gift to support and sustain the work of The Craddock Center. You can call The Craddock Center at 706-632-1772 to request a brochure.

Thank you again for your support of The Craddock Center and thank you for your consideration on how you can support its future.

DONATE NOW

You can support

The Craddock Center

- 1. Open camera
 - 2. Scan code
 - 3. Give now

Thank You for your generosity!



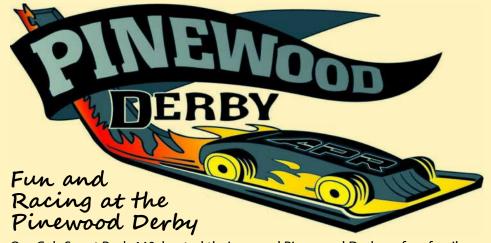




for **CHILD**and **FAMILY ENRICHMENT**

"You may be more comfortable SAYING YES to invitations to serve others, especially children who will someday remember you with fondness and gratitude."

—Dr. Fred Craddock



Our Cub Scout Pack 440, hosted their annual Pinewood Derby, a fun, family event, at The Craddock Center on Saturday, March 2nd.

First Place for speed went to Lucy Stover with second place going to Luke Harre. First place for Best in Show went to Luke Harre with second place going to Lucy Stover.

We appreciated the assistance of Troop members, James Grubb, and JJ Stover.

Luke Oliver, the younger brother of a former scout member, came to race his Thomas the Train car in the outlaw race. The outlaw race is open to everyone and is not limited by the rules and regulations of the official Pinewood Derby.

The Pinewood Derby is a Cub Scout car race where 7-inch toy cars, weighing no more than five ounces, are raced down a sloped track. The concept originated with Don Murphy in 1953. Murphy noted, "I wanted to devise a wholesome, constructive activity that would foster a closer father-son relationship and promote craftsmanship and good sportsmanship through competition."

Many of us probably have fond memories of participating in the Pinewood Derber. And there's a reason the race sticks in the minds of both Cub Scouts and grown adults alike. That little car we created with our families is a tangible representation of the effort, the suspense, and the thrill of working toward a goal and seeing it come to life.









Brokers for Blankets

Winters in the north Georgia mountains can be cold, and many of the families in our community do not have the blankets they need for the cold, winter months.

WE NEEDED BLANKETS!!

We reached out to our realtor friends who have supported The Craddock Center in the past to collect blankets for the families that we serve via our Living Room program. Coldwell Banker High Country Blue Ridge, Ansley Real Estate, and A.J. Petrillo responded by collecting 57 blankets.

The Living Room is a furniture and household goods outreach program stocked wholly from donations from our surrounding community.

Used and occasionally new furniture and household items are shared with families who are in crisis, recovering from fire, eviction, mold infestation, or family violence. We often see young families with small children visiting The Living Room in search of very simple items such as a table, a chair, a set of dishes or linens. We have a partnership with the Family Connections in Gilmer and Fannin Counties for referrals. We also offer support to organizations such as the Women's Crisis Center. We have seen many similar organizations in our community increase referrals of families to The Living Room. The Craddock Center provided furniture and household goods to 101 families and individuals from Fannin and Gilmer Counties this past year.

Smart Babies is Moving Forward Full Steam Ahead!

The Craddock Center is excited to report that Smart Babies, our newest program, is moving forward full steam ahead. Since mid-November, we have conducted six workshops with 21 moms and dads in attendance. The feedback from the parents has been very positive. It has been exciting to see the parents build bonds and friendship with each other as a result of the workshops.

Smart Babies is also getting recognition in our community. The Gilmer Times-Courier newspaper ran a lengthy article about the program, that began on the front page, on February 28th.

Currently we work with the parents who use the services of two organizations in our area: Her Hope Pregnancy Center in Blue Ridge, Georgia, and Safe Choice Pregnancy Center in Ellijay, Georgia. We will soon be expanding to a third, Georgia Mountains Health. Georgia Mountains Health serve families in four counties in our area and will provide the opportunity to expand our reach to more parents.

As a reminder, the guiding principles of **Smart Babies are:**

- Honor parents as their child's most influential and most loved teacher.
- Foster effective early-learning experiences for children birth to age 5.
- · Instill children with a joy and zest for learning that lasts a lifetime.
- Build relationships between parent, child, family, school, and community.

Parents attend three workshops over the year, for a specific age-range (such as 0-1, 1-2, 2-3), that are focused on the Ready for Kindergarten curriculum. Workshops are approximately 90 minutes in duration with up to 6-10 participants. During each workshop, parents will learn about learning targets for their children and be given methods and tools (toys and books) to focus on these targets at home. Lots of opportunities for sharing and practicing are included in the workshop. A meal or snack is provided after each workshop to promote further discussion and bonding among the parents.



and **FAMILY ENRICHMENT**

FREE Workshops

Teaching parents to be their child's best first teacher.

Workshops are provided for parents of children, ages 0-3, using a curriculum that emphasizes reading to their babies, talking with them, playing with them, and increasing meaningful interactions.



Songs & Stories 2024

Songs & Stories returned to the Craddock Center on March 9, 2024!

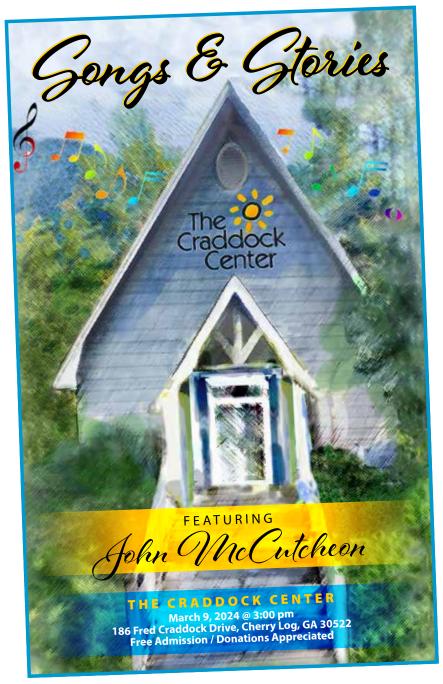
We were especially excited and honored that John McCutcheon, a world-traveled musician, songwriter, and folksinger, returned as the performer for this event. He thrilled our guests with beautiful folk music.

And Natalie Jones, one of our Arts Specialists, provided lively and humorous storytelling. She shared examples of both her storytelling work with children at our preschools and her personal stories crafted for grown-up audiences.

As always, admission was free, and our guests responded with very generous donations. The money raised will go towards the purchase of new books for the little ones we serve.

Songs & Stories was started by Dr. Fred Craddock over twenty years ago. He wanted something in the winter that people could enjoy. We offer an event that brings people together to have a fun winter afternoon highlighting the old Appalachian traditions of storytelling and folk music.













Are you looking for a rewarding experience?

A new opportunity to give back to your community?

Do you have a passion for children and literacy?

The Craddock Center is looking for motivated individuals to serve on its Board of Directors.

Most of us reach a point in our lives where we need a new challenge. What better way to introduce a new challenge than to inspire change by serving on a nonprofit Board such as with The Craddock Center. As a Board Member, you will witness first-hand the social impact of our programs for the children and families in our community while offering advice, oversight, and support.

Nonprofits such as The Craddock Center lead by fulfilling our mission and work to make an impact on the children and families of southern Appalachia. We are looking for members of our community who want to lead with us and bring your skills and expertise to make a difference in our community!

If you have an interest in serving on the Board of The Craddock Center, please contact Kirk Cameron at kirk-craddock@tds.net.



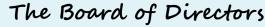
Welcome to our newest Board Member

The Board of Directors of The Craddock Center welcomes its newest Board member, Cathy Cavagnaro.



Cathy Cavagnaro

Cathy recently retired from her teaching career of twenty-eight years. She served as an elementary school teacher in the Johns Creek area for the last twenty-one years. In addition, Cathy taught pre-k children for six years with the New Jersey public schools. As a Fulton County teacher, Cathy received an extensive two-year LETRS training. This program supports the Science of Reading (which is an evidence-based model for effective literacy instruction). Cathy enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, watching baseball, cooking, and gardening. Cathy transitioned from living in the suburbs of Atlanta to mountain living in Blue Ridge. Cathy's favorite saying comes from Mahatma Gandhi: "Be the change you wish to see in the world."













Our Toymaker Angels Bring Joy and Happiness

On Wednesday, December 13, 2023, volunteers from The Craddock Center delivered 1,178 hand-made wooden toys to the children in the pre-K and Head Start programs we support. We can do this because of the generosity of St. Luke's United Methodist Church Woodshop from Houston, TX and the ToyMakers of East Lake in Palm Harbor, FL. These two organizations have been supporting the children of The Craddock Center for many years. We also thank the Woodworkers Guild of Georgia, Gordon Hellman and Gary Padgett for making toys for the children. Many of the teachers in the classrooms we support tell us the gifts of toys and books from The Craddock Center are the only gifts these children receive.

Thanks to our volunteer elves Debbi Hamm, Anderson Hamm, Todd Westcott, Shelby Edwards, and Mae Edwards. And thanks to our delivery elves: Beth Roberts, Joe Cantwell, Heidi Ferraro, and Carolyn Lakes & Larry Brannon for taking the toys to the schools.

The ToyMakers of East Lake - The ToyMakers of East Lake have given away over 150,000 hand-made wooden toys since 2009. They are an outreach mission of East Lake United Methodist Church and are a 100% volunteer non-profit organization to make smiles one toy at a time. They produce and donate brightly painted, hand-made wooden toys to 51 agencies for sick and needy children in stressful environments.

In addition to making toys, they also source, repair, and recycle bicycles back into their community to needy children, returning veterans, and homeless working adults.

The Woodshop of St. Luke's United Methodist Church - The Woodshop of St. Luke's has been making wooden toys for over 20 years and they give away four to five thousand toys each year. The Craddock Center was one of the first recipients of their toys. Their main goal is fellowship and giving to others.









Is She a Penguin, an Astronaut, a Butterfly?



Every week I get a text from Sharon Palmer, the Director of the Andrews Head Start. In this text, I see a picture of one our Arts Specialists, Sheila Clayton, in her costume for the week.

The following is in the job description of the Arts Specialist position for The Craddock Center: "The primary role of arts specialists is to love children and to engage and enrich them through music and movement." Sheila surely exemplifies this!

Sheila is not required to wear a different costume each week. She does it because she loves the children so much. Sheila chooses a costume that relates to the subject matter of the program. Sharon Palmer tells us the children love it and they are so engaged!

Sheila has been with The Craddock Center for two years and came to us with twenty-three years' experience working with pre-K children. Sheila says, "I have had many little arms reach around me in love and bigger ones as these same little ones grew into adults. I am so thankful to be working for an organization such as The Craddock Cener that has such a love and dedication for these little kiddos."



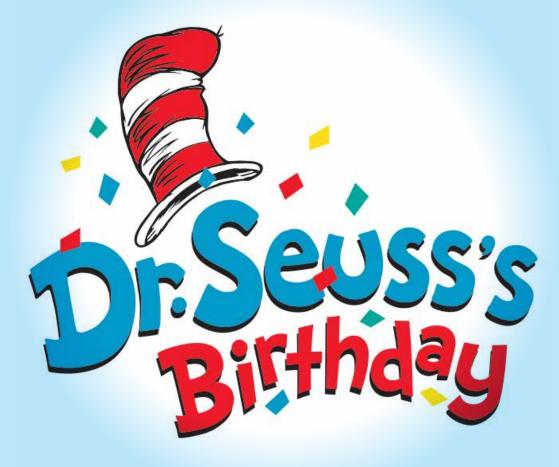






Celebrating

READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY & DR. SEUSS' BIRTHDAY



On March 5th and 6th, The Craddock Center celebrated Read Across America Day and is Dr. Seuss' Birthday. On this day volunteers from The Craddock Center delivered 1,178 brand new Dr. Seuss books and Dr. Seuss bookmarks to the pre-K and Head Start children we serve.

Read Across America Day is a day to celebrate the joys of reading. It also brings awareness to the importance of reading in education for our children. The founders of this day decided to have it on Dr. Seuss' birthday. Dr. Seuss is one of the greatest authors of children's books. Most kids have grown up reading his many entertaining books. The Craddock Center is making sure our kids can share in the joy of his books like many of us have over the years.

Thanks to Lynne Tholen, Lyn Thaxton, and Lynn Higginbotham for packing the books and bookmarks.... And thanks to Beth Roberts, Cathy Cavagnaro, Joe Cantwell, Larry Brannon, and Carolyn Lakes for delivering the books.

Thank you so much for the books! The kids are so proud of them! AND...Thank you for everything you do to promote literacy!

- Katrina Kingsley - Director, Gilmer County Pre-K

Thank you so much for the books and bookmarks! The kids loved them!

- Melissa Buchanan, Pickens Head Start

Special thanks to the Clipper Petroleum Foundation and Operation Round-Up for their generosity in supporting this program!









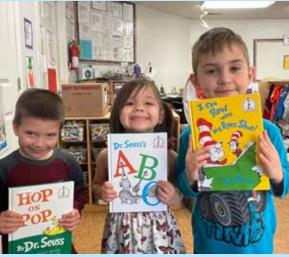
















Friends of The Craddock Center

The Craddock Center cannot do what we do for the children and families of Southern Appalachia without the financial support

of our donors. Thank you and recognition to those individuals, organizations, and foundations for their generosity

in supporting The Craddock Center January 1, 2023 through February 29, 2024.

\$20,000+ The Warren & Augusta Hume Foundation

\$15,000+ William B. Orkin Foundation, Inc.

\$10,000+

Gary and Nancy Fayard **Eugene and Karen Boring** \$9,000+

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\$500+

Beth Roberts Sherry and Bill Echelberger Vivian Guthrie

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Dianne D. Watson John and Frances Tipton America's RV Warranty Tommy and Cathy Archibald Ted and Cindy Minick Loahna Brenner Jerald and Aundre Rookstool

Up to \$500

Jewish Congregation of Blue Ridge Sandy Springs Christian Church Anne Haltiwanger Lutheran Church by the Lake Women Arlyn and Susan Moulder Jeffrey Welch Log Cabin Community Church Jeffre Ray Jack Nolen Leslie and Susan Spencer Wayne Everbach **Emily Smith** Layne Smith Albert Toth Michael Jones William Donovan Flizabeth Howard Jane Simpson Richard and Martha Kessler Paul H. Anderson Georgia Mountain Health Services Cynthia Easterling Johnny Wray Maureen and Daniel Hicks Mary Beussee Nordstrom

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